

Message Text

SECRET

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11

ACTION NEA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 NSC-05 NSCE-00 PM-01 SP-02 L-02

INR-05 CIAE-00 SSO-00 INRE-00 IO-03 ACDA-10 SAM-01

PRS-01 H-01 EUR-08 /060 W
----- 024642

O 110915Z AUG 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANAMA BAHRAIN

TO SECSTATE WASHINGTON DC NIACT IMMEDIATE 2368

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI UAE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY DOHA QATAR PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY JIDDA SAUDI ARABIA PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT KUWAIT PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY MUSCAT OMAN PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN IRAN PRIORITY

COMIDEASTFOR IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GE IMMEDIATE

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON UK IMMEDIATE

CNO WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T MANAMA 0932

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652 : GDS

TAGS : MARR, BA

SUBJECT : MIDDLE EAST FORCE STATUS

REF : MANAMA 909

SUMMARY: GOB WILL DELIVER NOT LATER THAN AFTERNOON AUGUST 12
ITS LETTER OF NOTIFICATION OF DECISION THAT NAVY PRESENCE
SHOULD TERMINATE JUNE 30, 1977. IT WILL BE CONFIDENTIAL LETTER
NOT FOR RELEASE AND GOB EXPECTS NO IMMEDIATE ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.
FOREIGN MINISTER EXPRESSED HOPE AREA SITUATION WOULD PERMIT
REVIEW OF THIS DECISION IN 1976, POSSIBLY PERMITTING EXTENSION
OF NAVY PRESENCE BEYOND 1977. HE EXPLAINED GOB'S CONVICTION
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IT IS IN NEITHER ITS INTEREST NOR USG'S TO PERMIT THIS ISSUE TO

REMAIN IN POLITICAL ARENA IN COMING MONTHS SINCE GOB IS FACING VITAL POLITICAL ISSUES ON WHICH IT IS STRUGGLING FOR POPULAR SUPPORT AND CANNOT RISK SERIOUS POLITICAL DEFEAT ON NAVY PRESENCE ISSUE FOR WHICH IT HAS "NO POPULAR SUPPORT". END SUMMARY

1. FOREIGN MINISTER ASKED ME TO COME BY MORNING AUGUST 11 AND ASKED IF I HAD RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS RE USG REACTION TO PROPOSED GOB LETTER NOTING DECISION TERMINATE MIDDLE EAST FORCE PRESENCE BY JUNE 30, 1977. EXPLAINED I WAS STILL AWAITING INSTRUCTIONS AND HOPED TO BE BACK TO HIM MORNING AUGUST 12.

2. FOREIGN MINISTER PROFESSED DIFFICULTY IN UNDERSTANDING WHAT USG HAS TO DECIDE OR REACT TO IN THIS MATTER. GOB IS SIMPLY INSISTING ON HANDING US CONFIDENTIAL LETTER CONFIRMING THE DECISION OF WHICH IT HAS ALREADY INFORMALLY MADE US AWARE. FOREIGN MINISTER REJECTED MY ARGUMENTS THAT PUTTING GOB'S DECISION IN WRITING MIGHT HAVE SYMBOLIC POLITICAL SIGNIFICANCE UNHELPFUL TO WORLDWIDE U.S. SECURITY INTERESTS WHICH GOB SUPPORTS. HE COUNTERED THAT WHILE GOB APPRECIATES HIGH LEVEL ATTENTION THIS ISSUE IS RECEIVING IN WASHINGTON, THE FACT REMAINS THAT GOB, TO HELP PRESERVE THE GULF STABILITY IT UNDERSTANDS THE USG SEEKS, FEELS IT MUST WRAP UP THIS MATTER IMMEDIATELY. THIS IS A VERY SIGNIFICANT POLITICAL PROBLEM TO BAHRAIN AND CANNOT BE A MATTER OF ALL THAT MUCH CONSEQUENCE TO USG.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER CONTINUED THAT THE ONLY REASONABLE ALTERNATIVE TO USG'S ACCEPTING GOB LETTER USING 1977 DATE WOULD BE FOR USG IMMEDIATELY TO NOTIFY GOB THAT IT IS TERMINATING AGREEMENT AS OF SUMMER 1976. FOREIGN MINISTER ASSUMED USG WOULD NOT WISH TO TAKE THIS STEP AND GOB IS CERTAINLY NOT ADVOCATING IT.

4. FOREIGN MINISTER SAID HE WOULD DATE LETTER AUGUST 12 AND DELIVER IT NOT LATER THAN AFTERNOON OF THAT DATE, SHOULD I BE UNABLE TO GET BACK TO HIM WITH INSTRUCTIONS EARLIER. HE EMPHASIZED THAT GOB'S DECISION HAD BEEN TAKEN AND LETTER WOULD BE DELIVERED IN THE SPIRIT OF U.S.-GOB FRIENDSHIP AND BAHRAIN'S DESIRE FOR EVER CLOSER RELATIONSHIP BASED ON "BRITISH MODEL". HE STRESSED GOB'S HOPE THAT
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AREA SITUATION, PARTICULARLY WILLINGNESS OF SAUDI ARABIA AND IRAN TO PUBLICALLY SUPPORT U.S. NAVY PRESENCE IN GULF, WOULD DEVELOP IN SUCH A MANNER THAT USG AND GOB MIGHT BE ABLE TO AGREE IN COURSE OF 1976 TO EXTEND THE PRESENCE "FOR A YEAR OR PERHAPS MORE" BEYOND 1977. HE EXPLAINED THAT LETTER WHICH HE WOULD DELIVER TO US WOULD BE "CONFIDENTIAL" AND NOT INTENDED FOR RELEASE, THAT GOB WOULD EXPECT NO ACKNOWLEDGEMENT IMMEDIATELY, AND THAT HE PERSONALLY HOPED OVER

COMING MONTHS THE TWO GOVERNMENTS COULD WORK OUT A FORMULA FOR SOME SORT OF PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT OF PRESENT INTENTION TO TERMINATE NAVY PRESENCE BY 1977. HE EXPLAINED THIS LAST POINT WAS SIMPLY A PERSONAL SUGGESTION AND NOT "OFFICIAL" AND THAT GOB QUITE RELAXED ABOUT TIMING OF ANY U.S. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF LETTER.

5. I THEREFORE ANTICIPATE NO ALTERNATIVE BUT TO RECEIVE LETTER WITHIN THE NEXT 36 HOURS AND GOT THE FEELING FROM MY DISCUSSION THAT THE LETTER WE RECEIVE WILL BE ESSENTIALLY THE GOB DRAFT I WAS EARLIER SHOWN (MANAMA 879) WITHOUT REPEAT WITHOUT THE SOFTENING TEXTUAL CHANGES I HAD SUGGESTED.

6. FOREIGN MINISTER WENT OVER ONCE AGAIN AT SOME LENGTH POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS WHICH HAVE FORCED GOB TO MAKE THIS DECISION. GOVERNMENT IS PREPARING FOR ROUGH PARLIAMENTARY SEASON IN WHICH IT EXPECTS REAL DIFFICULTY IN OBTAINING ASSEMBLY APPROVAL OF A SECURITY LAW AND LABOR LAW WHICH IT FEELS ESSENTIAL TO PRESERVE STABILITY OF BAHRAIN AND THE GULF. GOB ASSUMES USG FULLY SHARES ITS CONCERN ABOUT SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE ISSUES TO GULF STABILITY. GOB EXPECTS TO RECEIVE SOME ELEMENTS OF POPULAR SUPPORT FOR ITS EFFORT TO WIN THESE TWO VITAL ISSUES. ACCORDING FOREIGN MINISTER, IT SEES "NO EVIDENCE OR POPULAR OR PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORT" FOR CONTINUED U.S. NAVY PRESENCE IN BAHRAIN. IT HAS THEREFORE DECIDED THAT UNLESS IT "DEPOLITICIZES" THIS ISSUE IMMEDIATELY, IT FACES A POLITICAL DEFEAT WHICH WILL BE HARMFUL NOT ONLY TO BAHRAINI INTERESTS BUT ALSO, IN ITS VIEW, TO THE U.S. OBJECTIVE OF FURTHERING GULF STABILITY.
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